



Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce

Terms of Reference

May 2026

1. Context and Introduction

- 1.1 In Canada, the disparities that exist in racialized communities are well documented. Systemic barriers based on race have been created over our long and storied shared Canadian history.
- 1.2 Anti-Black racism is deeply embedded in Canadian institutions, policies and practices and is rooted in the history and legacy of the North American Trans-Atlantic slave trade. For many Black Durham residents, anti-Black racism is a part of daily life and negatively impacts their economic, social and overall well-being.
- 1.3 Systemic anti-Indigenous racism is another area where targeted intervention should be prioritized. The actions and inactions across all levels of government are not consistent with the core principles of truth and reconciliation and have exacerbated the conditions that negatively impact the health, opportunities, and well-being of Indigenous communities in Durham.
- 1.4 In 2020, Durham Regional Council endorsed its first Anti-Black Racism Town Hall and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Follow-Up [report](#). The report called for the establishment of an Anti-Racism Taskforce as a Committee of Council to ensure a consistent approach to addressing systemic racism. This taskforce will adopt a 'hub and spoke' model where working groups will be identified to address disparities in racialized (Indigenous, Black, Asian, etc.) communities. Given the deep and pervasive inequities resulting from anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, these areas have been the initial focus for the taskforce whose inaugural cohort of members served from 2021-2022.
- 1.5 The Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce (DRART) connects with the following Strategic Directions and Pathways in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:
 - Connected and Vibrant Communities
 - C7. Create accessible, lively, and culturally welcoming public spaces, including opportunities to access nature.

- Healthy People, Caring Communities
 - H2. Collaborate with partners to respond to complex social issues that improve community safety and well-being, including mental health and addictions.
 - H6. Collaborate with partners to co-ordinate settlement supports for newcomers.
- Strong Relationships
 - S1. Enhance inclusive opportunities for community engagement and meaningful collaboration.
 - S2. Build and strengthen respectful relationships with First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous communities.
 - S3. Collaborate across local area municipalities, with agencies, non-profits, and community partners to deliver co-ordinated and efficient services.
 - S4. Advocate to the federal and provincial government and agencies to advance regional priorities.
 - S5. Ensure accountable and transparent decision-making to serve community needs, while responsibly managing available resources.

2. Goal

- 2.1 To work with community stakeholders, Regional staff, and other relevant partners to ensure that Durham Region successfully implements its anti-racism framework in a manner consistent with the principles of the Ontario Human Rights Code and Durham's aim to demonstrate leadership in addressing systemic racism. Furthermore, to ensure that implementation plans are built on the lived experiences of racialized communities and centers their voices.

3. Mandate

- 3.1 The Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce will act in an advisory role to Regional Council through the Finance and Administration Committee on issues related to racism – structural, systemic, and interpersonal.
- 3.2 The DRART is an Advisory Committee established by Regional Council in accordance with these Terms of Reference. Committee members are guided by these Terms of Reference.

4. Scope of Activities

- 4.1 The scope of activities that the DRART may undertake includes, but is not limited to:

- Providing advice, feedback and guidance to Regional staff and Council on implementation of Durham Region's Anti-Racism Framework and initiatives designed to advance equity;
- supporting and enabling successful implementation of Durham Region's anti-racism plans by engaging and influencing relevant partners and networks;
- providing accurate and transparent reports to Regional Council on progress in the implementation of Durham Region's anti-racism plans;
- hosting events and providing forums for residents to learn more about what the Region and its partners are doing to address racism; and
- attending at least two DRART-related events per calendar year.

4.2 All members will be expected to participate in a taskforce subcommittee developed to address a specific trend, need, or systemic issue (education subcommittee, events subcommittee, etc.)

5. Composition

5.1 The DRART will be composed of between 14 to 17 members as follows:

- One member of Regional Council and an alternate;
- Ten (10) racialized community members with lived experience, specialized expertise, including those with intersectional social locations;
- Three (3) to six (6) representatives from organizations such as:
 - Community and socially focused organizations (e.g. DurhamOne, Bawaajigewin Aboriginal Community Circle, Durham Black Educators Network, Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre, Durham Chinese Cultural Centre, Durham Tamil Association, Indo-Canadian Association, Congress of Black Women, etc.)
 - Professional Associations (e.g. Durham Black Business and Professional Association, ByBlacks, Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce – Durham Region, etc.)
 - Healthcare and non-profit organizations (e.g. Lakeridge Health, Carea Community Health Centre, John Howard Society, Ontario Shores Centre, AIDS Committee of Durham Region, Durham Harm Reduction Coalition, etc.)

- Academia with a focus on anti-racism or anti-oppression (e.g. Ontario Tech University, Durham College, Trent Durham University, and/or local school boards)

- 5.2 The term of membership shall correspond with the term of Regional Council. If a member chooses to resign the Region will seek a replacement in accordance with Section 6.
- 5.3 At the discretion of the DRART chair and Region's Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, non-attendance of three meetings in a calendar year may be sufficient grounds for replacement.

6. Membership Selection

- 6.1 Durham Region will place an open call for individuals interested in appointment to the DRART, in accordance with the Public Appointments Policy. Interested individuals will be required to submit a completed application form to the Regional Clerk outlining their interest and qualifications.
- 6.2 The CAO's Office shall contact community, academic and professional leaders and invite them to apply for the DRART.
- 6.3 In nominating members to the DRART, regard shall be given to the aim of achieving a diversity in intersecting social identities. Regard shall also be given to previous community and/or professional involvement, knowledge of race and related issues, lived experience, residency within the Region and availability to attend meetings.
- 6.4 All members of the DRART will be appointed by the Finance and Administration Committee and Regional Council.
- 6.5 Regional Council shall appoint a representative and an alternate to the DRART.
- 6.6 In the case of a community or organizational member vacancy, the approach described in Section 6.1 will generally be followed.

7. Officers

- 7.1 A chair and a vice-chair will be elected annually by the DRART . The Region's Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion shall chair the inaugural DRART meeting of each term.

8. Support Services and Guests

- 8.1 Staff from the Region's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion division shall serve as staff liaison to the DRART and will provide administrative, procedural, and technical support to the DRART.

- 8.2 The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the Region or an alternate for the Chief Administrative Officer shall attend DRART meetings.
- 8.3 A Regional Staff Working Group, consisting of appropriate staff from all Regional departments shall be established to develop an Anti-Racism Framework which would detail actions that the Region as a corporation and as a community service provider will take to address systemic racism. The Regional Staff Working Group will also provide advice and expertise to the DRART and the staff liaison as needed.
- 8.4 The Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion shall keep the Region's Department Heads apprised of the activities of the DRART and the Regional Staff Working Group.
- 8.5 The Legislative Services Division of the Corporate Services Department will provide secretarial and other support services. Regional Council will provide a budget to cover the operational expenses of the DRART, and this budget will be administered by the Office of the CAO.
- 8.6 The DRART may invite individuals with specialized expertise to attend meetings on an as needed basis in a non-voting capacity.
- 8.7 Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) representing Durham Region may be invited to attend DRART meetings on an as needed basis and as ex-officio members in a non-voting capacity.

9. Meetings

- 9.1 The DRART will establish a meeting schedule at its inaugural meeting, taking into account the business needs and schedule of Regional Council and the Finance and Administration Committee. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Chair.
- 9.2 Community and organizational members of the DRART will be compensated for their time and work. Each member will be paid \$75.00 per meeting (attendance is a requirement for this compensation) and an hourly rate of \$25.00 for travel time and work outside of the scheduled meetings that has been pre-approved by Durham's Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Reimbursement will occur twice a year, in June and in December, up to a maximum of \$1,800 per member per year. Members who attend regularly scheduled meetings in person will be compensated for their travel time.
- 9.3 Regularly scheduled meetings will be held at Regional Headquarters, unless otherwise stated. Meetings may be held in an electronic or hybrid meeting format with electronic and in-person participation. Individuals may participate electronically using an approved platform.

- 9.4 All meetings will be open to the public, unless otherwise determined in accordance with the Municipal Act. As a formal Advisory Committee to the Region, the DRART is subject to the Regional Procedural By-law, unless otherwise specified in these Terms of Reference.
- 9.5 A quorum for DRART meetings shall be a majority of the sitting members.
- 9.6 If a quorum is not present within fifteen (15) minutes after the time appointed for a meeting, the Clerk or their designate shall record the names of the Members present and the meeting shall stand adjourned until the date of the next regular meeting or special meeting called in accordance with the Terms of Reference.
- 9.7 Members shall inform the staff liaison in advance of all planned absences, late arrivals, and early departures from a meeting, with as much notice as possible.

10. Minutes and Agenda

- 10.1 The minutes of each DRART meeting will be submitted for approval at the next regular meeting. Unapproved minutes will be circulated to members of Regional Council as part of the Council Information Package prepared by the Regional Clerk.
- 10.2 The DRART agendas will be prepared by the Staff Liaison, along with the DRART Chair or Vice Chair, with input from other DRART members.

11. Delegations and Presentations

- 11.1 Any person(s) wishing to appear before the DRART as a delegation must submit a request to delegations@durham.ca, advising of the topic or item to which they wish to speak, which will then be forwarded to the staff liaison in the Office of the CAO. All requests for delegations must be received at least one week prior to the meeting to ensure the inclusion in the agenda. Any person wishing to address the DRART as a delegate, who has not previously arranged to do so, may be granted permission to do so only by Committee resolution.
- 11.2 When the DRART has requested a presentation on a particular topic, the time frame allotted will depend on the subject under discussion.

12. Committee Resolutions

- 12.1 The DRART will seek to achieve consensus on decisions. Recommendations are “carried” if supported by a majority. Only resolutions as they appear in the adopted Minutes may be considered as officially representing the position of the DRART.

13. Annual Reports and Workplan

- 13.1 An annual report summarizing the activities completed in the previous year shall be prepared by the DRART. The annual report shall be forwarded to the Finance and Administration Committee.
- 13.2 An annual workplan with an estimate of the resources necessary and any suggested revisions to the Terms of Reference for the coming year shall also be prepared by the DRART for consideration and approval by the Finance and Administration Committee and Regional Council.

14. Group Agreements

- 14.1 At the beginning of each term, the DRART will develop and adopt a set of guidelines that express how the group will work together. The DRART has adopted the Group Agreements contained in Appendix 1 hereto, which form part of these Terms of Reference.